

EXHIBIT 15  
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NO 377

## Math and Science Teachers Support Montana Common Core State Standards

We are a group of Montana educators who are leaders in the improvement of math and science education. We have all had the honor of receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching – the nation's highest award for math and science teaching.

We are committed to seeing our students succeed at the highest level. Collectively, we support Montana's Common Core State Standards. We strongly believe in the Common Core State Standards and their promise for all students. We have signed this letter because we believe the Common Core State Standards are worthy of our students and worthy of our support.

Montana was the last of 46 states to adopt the Common Core Standards because the Montana Board of Public Education wanted to make sure they were right for Montana students. Educators, school administrators, and business leaders from across the state spent countless hours crafting, reviewing, and tweaking the Common Core Standards to make sure they will work for every student. Twelve public meetings were held over a two-year period before the Montana Board of Public Education voted to adopt the Common Core Standards November 4, 2011. The result is mathematics standards that provide a progression to college and career readiness.

In our experience, Montana students thrive in math when they: are asked to explain to themselves the meaning of a problem and look for entry points to its solution; make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations; understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments; apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace; consider available tools when solving a mathematical problem; try to communicate precisely to others; try to use clear definitions in discussion with others and in their own reasoning; look closely to discern a pattern or structure and notice if calculations are repeated; look both for general methods and for shortcuts; and recognize that mathematical understanding and procedural skills are equally important.

In math, Montana's Common Core Standards focus on core topics and skills, allowing educators time to teach at a depth that has not been feasible in the past. The Common Core Standards allow students the time to practice and refine skills, rather than race through standards that are a mile wide and an inch deep.

We acknowledge that there will be challenges ahead, but we strongly believe Montana's Common Core State Standards are a significant step forward. Educators like us are already working hard every day to make these standards a reality in classrooms across Montana.

The following recipients of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching concur in the above statement:

Melissa Romano, Helena; Elizabeth Matthews, Gallatin Gateway; Carol Pleninger, Havre; Courtney Niemeyer, Billings; Jon Konen, Great Falls; LeAnne Yenny, Bozeman; Darlene Ruble, Eureka; Charles Bertsch, Polson; Anne Keith, Bozeman; Mary Wren, Great Falls; Beth Thomas, Great Falls; Lisa Scott, Billings; Amy Konen, Great Falls; Wendy Pierce, Bozeman; Nina Miller, Billings; John Graves, Bozeman; Rick Jones, Billings; Nancy Marra, Great Falls; Jean Howard, Helena; Richard Seitz, Helena; Larry Kaber, Kalispell; Marilyn Alexander, Helena; Gil Alexander, Helena.